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Award Number: DAMD17-99-1-9413

TITLE: The Role of EMMPRIN in Tumor Progression

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REPORT DATE: December 2002

TYPE OF REPORT: Final Addendum

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Approved for Public Release;
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20030623 021

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGEForm Approved
OMB No. 074-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2002	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final Addendum (1 May 02 - 30 Nov 02)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Role of EMMPRIN in Tumor Progression			5. FUNDING NUMBERS DAMD17-99-1-9413	
6. AUTHOR(S) : Bryan P. Toole, Ph.D.				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Tufts University Boston, Massachusetts 02111 E-Mail: bryan.toole@tufts.edu			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited				12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE
13. Abstract (Maximum 200 Words) (abstract should contain no proprietary or confidential information) Crucial steps in tumor progression and the process of metastasis, e.g. tumor growth, invasion through extracellular matrices and angiogenesis, involve proteolytic modification of the pericellular matrix surrounding tumor cells. A major class of proteases involved in these processes is the matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs), and inhibition of MMPs prevents progression and metastasis of several tumor types, including human breast carcinomas, in animal models. In vivo, tumor MMPs are often produced by stromal cells associated with tumors as well as the tumor cells. The tumor cell surface glycoprotein, EMMPRIN, stimulates MMP production by fibroblasts and endothelial cells, and may be an important regulator of MMP production during tumorigenesis in vivo. However no direct evidence for its role in tumor progression had been published prior to this study. The focus of this proposal has been to demonstrate directly whether or not EMMPRIN promotes breast cancer progression, whether a role for EMMPRIN in tumor progression may be to promote or induce angiogenesis, and whether approaches can be developed that may have future therapeutic potential. In this addendum we have shown that increased expression of EMMPRIN also induces MMP production and increased invasiveness in phenotypically normal human mammary epithelial cells. Thus this study has shown that EMMPRIN promotes tumor growth and invasion and that interference with the action of EMMPRIN may be an effective way to retard breast carcinoma progression in patients.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS: breast cancer, tumor growth, metastasis, recombinant adenovirus			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 6	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18
298-102

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INTRODUCTION

Crucial steps in tumor progression and the process of metastasis, e.g. tumor growth, invasion through extracellular matrices and angiogenesis, involve proteolytic modification of the pericellular matrix surrounding tumor cells. A major class of proteases involved in these processes is the matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs), and inhibition of MMPs prevents progression and metastasis of several tumor types, including human breast carcinomas, in animal models. In vivo, tumor MMPs are often produced by stromal cells associated with tumors as well as the tumor cells themselves. The tumor cell surface glycoprotein, EMMPRIN, stimulates MMP production by fibroblasts and endothelial cells, and may be an important regulator of MMP production during tumorigenesis in vivo. We recently published direct evidence for an important role for EMMPRIN in tumor progression (Zucker et al., 2001). The focus of this addendum has been to examine the effect of up-regulation of emmprin on invasiveness and MMP production in epithelial cells themselves rather than on stromal cell MMP production. This study adds to our knowledge of the role of EMMPRIN in cancer and may constitute a newly discovered aspect of breast carcinoma progression. Interference with EMMPRIN action may then be an effective way to retard breast carcinoma progression in patients.

Abbreviations used: EMMPRIN, extracellular matrix metalloproteinase inducer; MMP, matrix metalloproteinase; MMP-2, gelatinase A; MMP-9, gelatinase B; MT-MMP, membrane-type MMP.

BODY

The work performed during the extension period is an outcome of our previously revised **Statement of Work, Task #2**: To explore the use of recombinant adenoviral constructs for efficient delivery.

Other work has shown that EMMPRIN on the surface of tumor cells stimulates MMP production by fibroblasts (Guo et al., 1997) and endothelial cells (Caudroy et al., 2002). We have recently found that increased expression of EMMPRIN in tumor cells also stimulates MMP production in the tumor cells themselves (Zucker et al., 2001). We have now explored this phenomenon more extensively, using recombinant EMMPRIN adenovirus infection to stimulate EMMPRIN expression in normal epithelial cells, specifically MCF-10A human mammary epithelial cells.

First we showed that increased expression of EMMPRIN in MCF-10A cells caused an increase in production of MMP-2, compared to cells treated with the control recombinant β -galactosidase adenovirus (Fig. 1A). Since membrane-type MMP-1 (MT-MMP-1) is required for activation of MMP-2, we also examined its expression and found that it also increased compared to cells treated with the control recombinant β -galactosidase adenovirus (Fig. 1B). In addition we examined a variety of other MMPs involved in tumor cell invasion, namely MMP-1, MMP-3, MMP-7, MMP-9, MT2-MMP, MT3-MMP, MT4-MMP, and MT5-MMP, but found no increase in their expression.

Next, we examined whether increased expression of EMMPRIN affected invasiveness of the normal MCF-10A mammary epithelial cells, employing a Matrigel invasion chamber assay. We found that increased EMMPRIN expression caused increased invasion in this system, compared to cells treated with the control recombinant β -galactosidase adenovirus (Fig. 2). We also found that treatment with an MMP2/9 inhibitor reduced EMMPRIN-enhanced invasion to control levels (Fig. 2).



Figure 1. Effect of elevated EMMPRIN levels on MMP-2 and MT1-MMP production.

EMMPRIN expression was increased in MCF10A human mammary epithelial cells via recombinant adenoviral infection.

- Gelatin zymography of conditioned media from MCF10A cells infected with control recombinant β -galactosidase adenovirus (10A- β -gal) or with recombinant EMMPRIN adenovirus (10A-EMPT).
- Western analysis of conditioned media from MCF10A cells infected with control recombinant β -galactosidase adenovirus (MCF10A- β -gal) or with recombinant EMMPRIN adenovirus (MCF10A-EMPT).

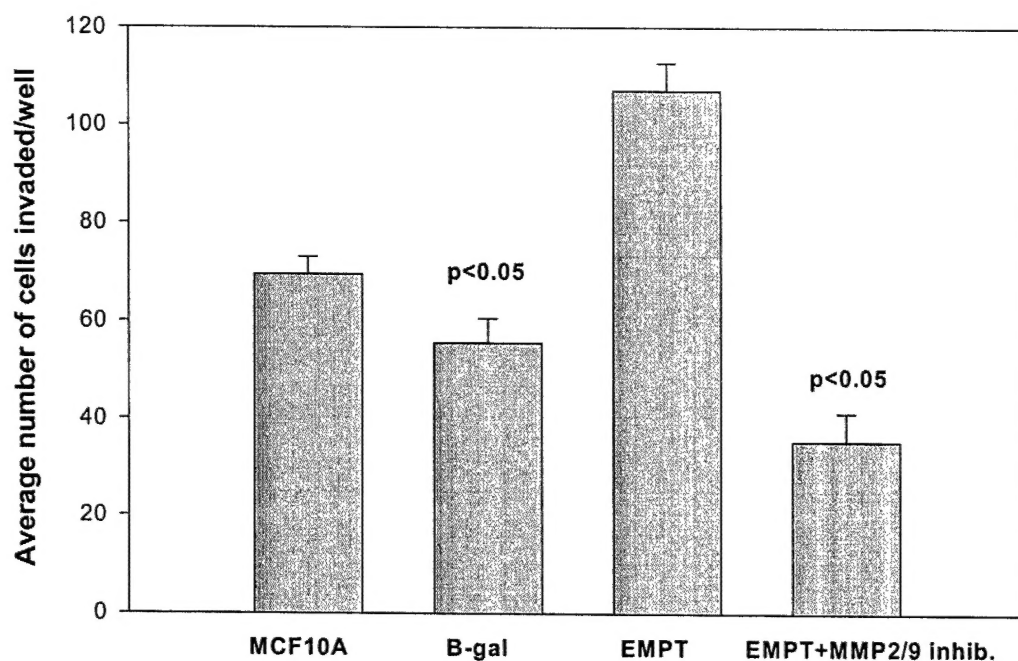


Figure 2. Effect of elevated EMMPRIN expression on cell invasion. EMMPRIN expression was increased in MCF10A human mammary epithelial cells via adenoviral infection. The cells were placed in Matrigel invasion chambers, allowed to invade for 24 hours, then invaded cells were counted. MCF 10A, untreated cells; B-gal, treated with control β -galactosidase adenovirus; EMPT, treated with recombinant EMMPRIN adenovirus; treated with recombinant EMMPRIN adenovirus + inhibitor of MMP-2 and MMP-9 activity.

KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1) Demonstration that increased expression of EMMPRIN in normal epithelial cells induces increased production of specific MMPs, MMP-2 and MT1-MMP2.
- 2) Demonstration that increased expression of EMMPRIN in normal epithelial cells induces increased invasiveness.

REPORTABLE OUTCOMES**Thesis completed:**

Ph.D. completed by Erica Marieb: "Effects of increased expression of a matrix metalloproteinase inducer, EMMPRIN, on malignant cell characteristics."

CONCLUSIONS

We conclude from the above work that EMMPRIN not only promotes mammary carcinoma progression via stimulation of MMP production in tumor stromal cells but also in the tumor cells themselves. In addition EMMPRIN induces invasive properties in normal epithelial cells. Thus inhibition of EMMPRIN action may be useful therapeutically.

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The personnel receiving salary from this grant were:
Bryan P. Toole, Ph.D.
Huiming Guo, Ph.D.